

CLAIMS

1. A package comprising a receptacle having a mouth at an upper end, a flexible zipper attached to said mouth and comprising first and second fastener strips, a slider movably mounted to said zipper for alternately opening or closing portions of said first and second fastener strips depending on the direction of movement of said slider relative to said zipper, and an enclosed header enclosing said zipper and said slider, wherein said enclosed header comprises first and second side edges and first and second walls each extending from said first side edge to said second side edge, said first side edge comprising a first tear notch formed therein, and said first wall of said enclosed header comprising a first line of weakness extending across said header, wherein said first line of weakness lies in a region having an upper boundary at an elevation which is lower than a top of said slider.

2. The package as recited in claim 1, wherein said region is lower than an elevation of said first tear notch, and said first wall of said enclosed header further comprises a first slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said first tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said first line of weakness.

3. The package as recited in claim 2, wherein said first slit is inclined at an angle in a range of 30 to 90 degrees relative to a line of said zipper, said lower point of said slit being further away from the closest one of said first and second side edges than is said upper point of said first slit.

4. The package as recited in claim 2, wherein said first tear notch has an elevation which is higher than said top of said slider.

5. The package as recited in claim 2, wherein said second side edge of said enclosed header comprises a second tear notch, and said first wall of said enclosed header further comprises a second slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said second tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said first line of weakness.

6. The package as recited in claim 2, wherein said second wall of said enclosed header comprises:

a second line of weakness extending across said header, said second line of weakness lying in a region having an upper boundary at an elevation which is lower than said top of said slider, and

a second slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said first tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said second line of weakness.

7. The package as recited in claim 6, wherein said first and second lines of weakness are overlapping.

8. The package as recited in claim 6, wherein said first and second slits are overlapping.

9. The package as recited in claim 5, wherein lower end points of said first and second slits are closer together than are upper end points of said first and second slits.

10. The package as recited in claim 1, wherein said enclosed header further comprises a seal for sealing said first and second walls together.

11. The package as recited in claim 1, wherein said enclosed header is integrally formed with said receptacle.

12. The package as recited in claim 1, wherein said enclosed header comprises a folded piece, said first and second walls of said folded piece being sealed to said receptacle.

13. A package comprising a receptacle having a mouth at an upper end, a flexible zipper attached to said mouth and comprising first and second fastener strips, a slider movably mounted to said zipper for alternately opening or closing portions of said first and second fastener strips depending on the

10042985-101901

direction of movement of said slider relative to said zipper, and an enclosed header enclosing said zipper and said slider, wherein said enclosed header comprises first and second side edges and first and second walls each extending from said first side edge to said second side edge, said first side edge comprises a first tear notch, and said first wall comprises a first line of weakness extending across said header in a region lower than an elevation of said first tear notch and a first slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said first tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said first line of weakness.

14. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said second side edge comprises a second tear notch formed therein, and said first wall further comprises a second slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said second tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said first line of weakness.

15. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said first tear notch is located at an elevation higher than a top of said slider.

16. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said first fastener strip comprises a first interlockable member and said second fastener strip comprises a second interlockable member, said first line of weakness being located in a region which is lower than said first and second interlockable members.

17. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said second wall comprises a second line of weakness extending across said header in a region lower than said elevation of said first tear notch and a second slit traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said first tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said second line of weakness.

18. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said first slit is inclined at an angle in a range of 30 to 90 degrees relative to a line of said

zipper, said lower point being further away from the closest one of said first and second side edges than is said upper point of said first slit.

19. The package as recited in claim 17, wherein said first and second lines of weakness are overlapping.

5 20. The package as recited in claim 17, wherein said first and second slits are overlapping.

21. The package as recited in claim 14, wherein lower end points of said first and second slits are closer together than are upper end points of said first and second slits.

10 22. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said enclosed header is integrally formed with said receptacle.

23. The package as recited in claim 13, wherein said enclosed header comprises a folded piece, said first and second walls of said folded piece being sealed to said receptacle.

15 24. A method of packaging product comprising the steps of:

slitting a continuous length of packaging film at successive package length intervals, first and second slits being made in the packaging film for each package length interval, neither of said first or second slits reaching an edge of the packaging film;

20 attaching successive slider/zipper assemblies to said packaging film, one slider/zipper assembly being attached to the packaging film for each package length interval, each slider/zipper assembly overlying at least a respective one of said first and second slits;

25 forming said packaging film into successive packages, each package having a respective slider/zipper assembly;

filling each of said packages with product; and

sealing each of said filled packages.

25. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein each slider/zipper assembly overlies said first and second slits for each packaging length interval.

26. The method as recited in claim 25, wherein each slider/zipper assembly is oriented in a machine direction when attached to the packaging film.

27. The method as recited in claim 25, wherein each slider/zipper assembly is oriented in a transverse direction when attached to the packaging film.

28. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein said second slit is generally parallel to and overlying said first slit after said forming step.

29. The method as recited in claim 25, further comprising the step of forming a line of weakness in the packaging film, said line of weakness being generally located along a line where said first and second slits are closest together.

30. The method as recited in claim 28, further comprising the step of forming first and second lines of weakness in the packaging film, said first line of weakness being generally parallel to and overlying said second line of weakness after said forming step, an end point of said first line of weakness being adjacent an end point of said first slit and an end point of said second line of weakness being adjacent an end point of said second slit.

31. The method as recited in claim 24, further comprising the step of forming a tear notch along a side edge of each package, said tear notch being placed at an elevation generally aligned with an elevation of a point along said first slit in each package.

32. The method as recited in claim 24, wherein third and fourth slits are made in the packaging film at successive package length intervals during said slitting step, neither of said third or fourth slits reaching an edge of the

packaging film.

33. A package comprising a receptacle having a mouth at an upper end, a flexible zipper attached to said mouth and comprising first and second fastener strips, a slider movably mounted to said zipper for alternately opening or closing portions of said first and second fastener strips depending on the direction of movement of said slider relative to said zipper, and an enclosed header enclosing said zipper and said slider, wherein said enclosed header comprises first and second side edges and first and second walls each extending from said first side edge to said second side edge, said first side edge comprises a first tear notch, and said first wall comprises a first line of weakness extending generally laterally across said header in a region lower than an elevation of said first tear notch and a second line of weakness traversing a range of elevations encompassing a first elevation near an elevation of said first tear notch and a second elevation near an elevation of said first line of weakness.

34. A method of manufacturing a reclosable package, comprising the steps of: forming first and second slits in a film; attaching a reclosable slider-zipper assembly to said film; folding said film so that said first slit is aligned with said second slit; and sealing edges of said folded film.

35. The method as recited in claim 34, further comprising the steps of: forming first and second lines of weakness in said film which are aligned as the result of said folding step.

36. The method as recited in claim 35, further comprising the step of forming a tear notch along one of said sealed edges.

37. A method of attaching an enclosed header to a reclosable package having a mouth, comprising the steps of: forming first and second slits in a piece of film; folding said film so that said first slit is aligned with said second slit; and sealing said folded film to said reclosable package in a manner that encloses said mouth.

38. The method as recited in claim 37, further comprising the steps of: forming first and second lines of weakness in said film which are aligned as the result of said folding step.

5 39. The method as recited in claim 38, further comprising the steps of: sealing the side edges of said folded film and forming a tear notch along one of said sealed side edges.